

JACKIE'S DOWNHILL ROAD TO WEMBLEY



Wycombe's Mick Holifield stays on an even keel as Loakes Park slopes away behind him.

BRIAN LEE has no doubts. Middlesbrough will go all the way to Wembley and win the FA Cup.

His prediction is based on this double-barrelled belief: "They are the best organised team in football, with the best manager in the game."

So who is Lee? He's the 38-year-old manager of Wycombe Wanderers—the Rothmans Isthmian League amateurs that Middlesbrough must beat in the third round on Saturday.

Lee—director of the Bisham Abbey Recreation Centre—is quite happy to take Cup week's most bizarre statement a stage further.

"Believe me, I'm not trying to con anyone," he says. "If we were playing

 **By HARRY MILLER**

Newcastle or Queen's Park Rangers—teams with a prima donna—we'd be in with a chance.

But Jack Charlton has a team of efficient workers. He has no problem players.

Platt is a good keeper. Craggs goes forward well. Look at the size of Boam, Maddren is a superb footballer. Spraggan a reliable pro. Mills a magnificent player. Souness would walk across water for Big Jack.

"That's what we're up against."

Wycombe remain strictly amateur. "The inducement to beat Middlesbrough is sheer pride . . . nothing else," says Lee.

They are a mixture of schoolteachers, estate agents, fitters, an accountant, a company director and a bricklayer.

Above all, they have the most fearsome slope in football. It is 11 ft. from one side to the other. And you can get dizzy just looking at it.

"You can always spot a Wycombe player," jokes Lee. "They're the ones with one leg shorter than the other."

Lee is probably taking realism to its extreme. But I don't envy Middlesbrough their task on Saturday.

Lop-sided

Mick Holifield, the talented midfield player who broke his right wrist in Wycombe's second round replay win at Bournemouth, will know on Thursday if he can play against Middlesbrough.

Yesterday, Holifield looked in at Wycombe's lop-sided Loakes Park ground and said: "I'm going to hospital on Thursday and I'm hoping they'll change my present plaster for a lightweight one.

Brian is going to check with the Football Association to see if they

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LEE—Boro boost.

will then O.K. it for me to play."

And Middlesbrough? They plan to send their players out fifteen minutes before the kick-off to help them adjust to that slope.

"We're not being kidding by Wycombe's no-chance approach," said manager Charlton. "Cup ties are a make-or-break ninety minutes. Anything can happen."